



FAITH BIBLE COLLEGE

2 Timothy 2:15

*"Study to show thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needs not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth."*

HERMENEUTICS "Effective Bible Study"



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Dear Student

Welcome to Faith Bible College

*Our Vision is to Empower, Edify & Equip the Body of Christ in
The Word of Truth, So that we can be Leaders of Today
& Teachers for Tomorrow.*

*"Leaders are those whose aroma lingers long after they have completed
the task and others who sniff it, wants to be like them"*

*"Leadership is not a title but a Function
& that Function pulls you to its Position
& the Position determines your Title"*

*Blessings & Graceful Studying
Professor Ronnie Moodley*

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INTRODUCTION

Bible study as a Christian is vital for a person to grow and develop. In the same way that a baby grows and becomes a child, then a young adult and finally a mature adult, so we as believers are to grow up through the Word of God.

Hebrews 6:1-2 "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

Our spiritual growth takes place as we read and study the Word, pray and fellowship with God on a daily basis. Many Christian's read the Bible on a daily basis but not many have found their efforts in Bible Study successful and therefore have become unmotivated. Thus they merely graze the surface of the fullness of God and His plans found in the Word without digging deeper and seeking its true treasure. In the same way that a pirate needs to dig for treasure in the sand on a beach so we need to dig into the Word of God to bring forth the treasure that God has hidden within its pages.

What hinders our Bible Study?

What hinders most people from pursuing this deeper knowledge of the Word of God? Why are most people content to read the Word and receive a scripture for the day or the week, yet they do not want to take that scripture and dissect it?

- Some people do not dig deeper in the Word of God because they do not know how to do it.
- Some people who have tried in the past have not had any success and therefore are not motivated to continue in it
- Some people are merely too lazy to pursue this task as Bible study and Biblical interpretation takes an effort and time.

However, if we are to deepen our walk with God and our knowledge of Him, we need to be willing to go deeper in His Word, understanding the importance of Bible study and thereby become better acquainted with the techniques that we can use in order to interpret the Bible correctly.

The objective of this course is to teach you not only the importance of the Word of God and the necessity to study, but to open your eyes to the vast amount of tools that are able to help you in your study and the various techniques and methods that can be used in interpretation.

WHAT IS BIBLE STUDY?

Bible study is the process by which we delve into the text of the Bible in order to better understand what has been written and why it has been written. It is an in depth analysis of the Bible with the aim of allowing the Bible to teach us so that we can practically apply the truth to our daily lives. Bible study is not an intellectual exercise to increase our head knowledge but more importantly it is a heart-changing encounter with God through which we are able to daily change by the challenges of becoming more like Him. In order to study the Bible effectively we need to incorporate in our study, biblical hermeneutics.

WHAT IS HERMENEUTICS?

Biblical hermeneutics is perhaps summarized best by 2 Timothy 2:15. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Biblical hermeneutics is the science of knowing how to properly interpret the various types of literature found in the Bible. For example, a psalm should often be interpreted differently than a prophecy. A proverb should be understood and applied differently from a law. This is the purpose of biblical hermeneutics - to help us to know how to interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

HOW SHOULD THE BIBLE BE INTERPRETED?

Literally:

The most important law of Biblical hermeneutics is that the Bible should be interpreted literally. Literal Bible interpretation means you understand the Bible in its normal/plain meaning. The Bible says what it means and means what it says. Many make the mistake of trying to read between the lines and come up with meanings for Scriptures that are not truly in the text.

Historically:

Historical interpretation refers to understanding the culture, background, and situation which prompted the text.

Grammatically:

Grammatical interpretation is recognizing the rules of grammar and nuances of the Hebrew and Greek languages and applying those principles to the understanding of a passage.

Contextually:

Contextual interpretation involves always taking the surrounding context of a verse/passage into consideration when trying to determine the meaning. No interpretation should take place if taken out of context. Interpretation should always take place within the proper context of the scriptures.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE STUDY

Bible study is vital to every believer. It is through the Word of God that we are able to:

Grow spiritually:

1 Peter 2:2 "You must crave pure spiritual milk so that you can grow into the fullness of your salvation. Cry out for this nourishment as a baby cries for milk,"

Jeremiah 15:16 "Your words are what sustain me. They bring me great joy and are my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty."

This spiritual growth has nothing to do with our position in God (as we all have been given the same position – that is being seated with Him), nor has it to do with God's favour on our lives, nor it is the length of time that we have been born again nor the amount of seminars and Bible Colleges that we have attended. Spiritual growth is a result of understanding and practicing the principles and precepts that God has set forth in His Word. It is not only reading the Scripture (hearing) but it is being able to interpret them in such a manner that we will be able to apply them practically to life.

Better know God:

Hebrews 1:1-3 "Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. But now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he made the universe and everything in it. The Son reflects God's own glory, and everything about him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of his command. After he died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, he sat down in the place of honour at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven."

Through diligent study of the Bible we are able to learn more about God. It is His revelation to man. This revelation has come through the patriarchs, the prophets and especially in the image of the Son (John 1:1) and has been written down by men so that we can benefit from the writings and come to a better understanding of the nature and the character of God.

Better know ourselves:

1 Peter 2:4-5 “Come to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by the people, but he is precious to God who chose him. And now God is building you, as living stones, into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are God's holy priests, who offer the spiritual sacrifices that please him because of Jesus Christ.”

As we read and study the Word of God we not only gain a better understanding of Who God is but we also learn more about ourselves. We learn about our former nature (slaves to sin) and our latter nature that has been transformed by the power of God. Through the study of the Word of God we are able to answer questions like?

- Who am I? The Bible says that we are children of God, priests and kings unto Him (1 Peter 2). The Bible says that we have been made more than conquerors (Romans 8) and that we have been skilfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 149).
- Why am I here? The Bible provides us with purpose. Through the Word of God we see that we have been given a Great commission which can be fulfilled by using the various gifting and callings that He has given to us.
- Where I am going? The Bible shows us our future. Not only is this future one of success here on earth (Jeremiah 29:11), but it is a glorious future one day when we are take into His Presence.
- Where did I come from? The Bible answers the fundamental question of where did I come from by saying, “In the beginning, God...” (Genesis 1:1). We came from God and therefore are not a mistake of man.
- How should I behave as a believer? The Ten Commandments in the Old Testament provided the Israelites with a guide as to how they were to treat one another. In the New Testament through the Epistles, writers like Paul, Peter and John have shown us how we are to act towards our enemies and fellow Christians.

The Word of God is a mirror that we use to see ourselves for who we are and therefore cry out to God to change. James 1:22-25 “And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself. For if you just listen and don't obey, it is like looking at your face in a mirror but doing nothing to improve your appearance. You see

yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law—the law that sets you free—and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it."

Be Victorious over sin:

Ephesians 6:17 "Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Psalms 119:9-11 "How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word and following its rules. I have tried my best to find you— don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

Avoid error and false teachings:

Hosea 4:6 "My people are being destroyed because they don't know me. It is all your fault, you priests, for you yourselves refuse to know me. Now I refuse to recognize you as my priests. Since you have forgotten the laws of your God, I will forget to bless your children."

In the Old Testament the priests had been given a duty to teach the people of God the statutes and commandments. This is the same principle that we see in practice in the Church with the pastors and teachings. However, just as the priests in that time did not teach the truth so we need to be aware that there are false teachers and preachers. Therefore for us not to fall into deception, we need to ensure that we know the truth and have the truth in our hearts. The Church of Berea were able to distinguish between truth and error because they studied the Word of God for themselves. Acts 17:11 "And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to check up on Paul and Silas, to see if they were really teaching the truth."

Become effective spiritually:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do."

OUR ATTITUDE IN OUR APPROACH TO BIBLE STUDY

Right Bible study should always begin with the right attitude. When Ezra studied the Law, he had prepared and determined in his heart that he would not only study the Law but that he would also obey it (Ezra 7:10). In the same manner, when we spend time in the Word we need to have the following attitudes:

We need to be hungry for the truth:

Matthew 5:6 “God blesses those who are hungry and thirsty for justice, for they will receive it in full.”

We need to eat the Word:

Eating the Word means that we chew on it through meditation and then digest it, or allow it to settle in our minds so that it not only provides us with sustenance but that it becomes a part of us. Job 23:12 “I have not departed from his commands but have treasured his word in my heart.”

We need to model the Word of God:

James 1:22 “And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself.”

We need to pray for revelation of God's Word:

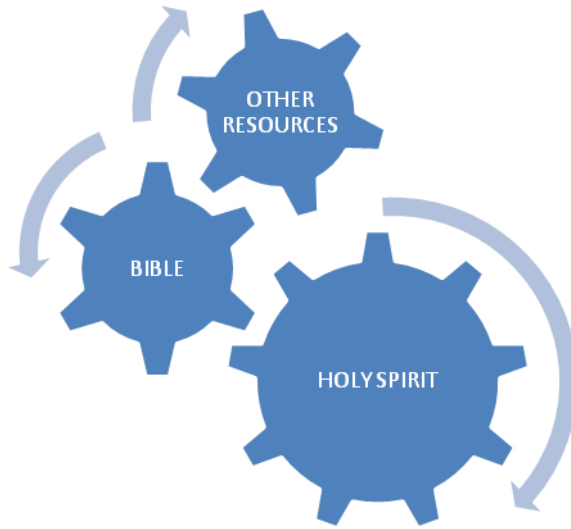
Psalm 119:18 “Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your law.”

Luke 24:45 “Then he opened their minds to understand these many Scriptures.”

We need to speak and pray the Word of God:

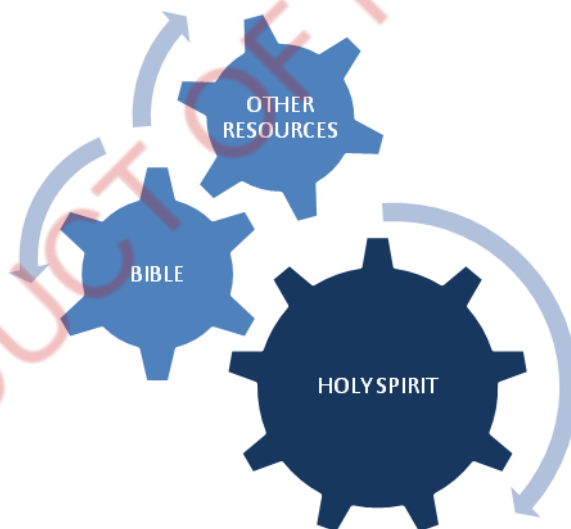
Romans 10:17 “Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news—the Good News about Christ.”

TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY



In the same way that a carpenter has tools to help construct something, so the Bible student needs to ensure that they have tools that will help them in their studies. For effective Bible study to take place a person will need to ensure that they are completely dependant upon the Holy Spirit in interpretation and that they have chosen a good study Bible and have relevant resources that will help them.

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT



The Bible teaches us that it is the role of the Holy Spirit to help the believer. We see that it is the Holy Spirit who:

- **Will guide us into all truth:**

John 16:13 "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future."

- **Will teach us:**

John 14:26 "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you"

- **Will help us live a life pleasing to God:**

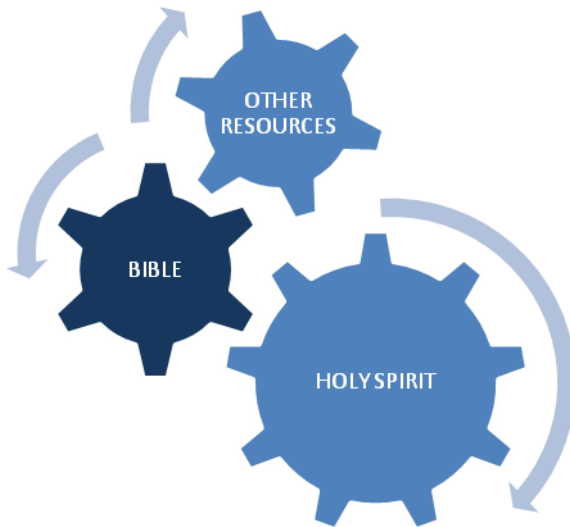
Galatians 5:16-17, 25 ""So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature . . . Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit"

- **Will help us when we pray:**

Romans 8:26 says, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express"

Therefore we are to rely on the Holy Spirit's illumination to gain insights into the meaning and application of Scripture (John 16:12-15, 1 Corinthians 2:9-11). It is the Holy Spirit's work to throw light upon the Word of God so that the believer can assent to the meaning intended and act on it. The Holy Spirit, as the "Spirit of truth" (John 16:13), guides us so that "we may understand what God has freely given us" (1 Corinthians 2:12).

2. THE BIBLE



The Bible can be read as great literature, or as a history of Israel, or as a source book of theological information. It is all of these things. But none of them does full justice to the purpose of Scripture as set forth by the Bible writers themselves. This amazing book, the Bible, is the source of truth, the standard for meaningful life, the revelation of Jesus Christ, the key to true freedom and liberty, and true food for man's soul.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The Bible: The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word *biblion* which simply means "book."

The Scriptures: This word is the word we use in our translation of the Greek word *graphai*, which can also be translated as "writings."

Testament: This word is derived from the Latin word *testamentum*, which was used in early Latin translations of both the Greek and Hebrew words for a "will" or "covenant."

THE BIBLE IS A MIRACLE BOOK

The Bible is the most remarkable book ever written. About 40 men of several countries and many occupations did the writing. These men ranged from being shepherds (Amos and David), to kings (David and

Samson), to political leaders (Daniel) to fishermen (Peter and John), to educated doctors (Luke) to Jewish rabbis (Paul) and many more.

They wrote in three different continents – Africa, Asia and Europe - over a period of approximately 1500 years and in three languages - Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Yet the Bible is a well-organized unity with one great theme and central figure - Jesus Christ. All of this would be impossible unless the Bible had one supreme Author - and it did - the Holy Spirit of God.

THE BIBLE HAS DIVINE AUTHORSHIP

The Bible though written by men was divinely inspired by God. The Bible itself specifically claims that God is the Author:

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13 “And we will never stop thanking God that when we preached his message to you, you didn't think of the words we spoke as being just our own. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it was. And this word continues to work in you who believe.
- 1 Corinthians 14:37 “If you claim to be a prophet or think you are very spiritual, you should recognize that what I am saying is a command from the Lord himself.”
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophets themselves or because they wanted to prophesy. It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God.”
- Deuteronomy 18:18-19 “I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will tell that prophet what to say, and he will tell the people everything I command him. I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf.”

THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE:

The Bible is unique in its continuity:

The Bible has a unique continuity that despite the fact that it was written over 40 generations, the same theme comes through throughout.

The Bible is unique in its survival:

Being written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish its style, correctness or existence. The Bible has withstood vicious attacks of its enemies as no other book. Many have tried to burn it, ban it, and outlaw it from the days of Roman emperors to present-day Communist or Islamic-dominated countries.

THE BIBLE IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

John 1:1 "In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God." John 1:14 "So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father."

The Bible reveals Jesus Christ. Everything from the beginning of time, when the Words were spoken over the waters, to the end of time when He will return for His Bride is all about Jesus. He is the reason behind all the events. He has been spiritually watermarked on every page of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. For example:

- In Genesis He is the One who is to crush the serpents head (Genesis 3), He is the promised Seed (Genesis 17) and He is the Lamb that will be provided (Genesis 22)
- In Exodus He is the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12)
- In Numbers He is the brazen serpent that is lifted high so that the people could be healed from the plague (Numbers 21:9)
- In Joshua He is the Captain of the Army who went before Joshua and the children of Israel (Joshua 5)
- In the Psalms and in the Book of John He is the Good Shepherd (Psalm 23, John 10)

- In Isaiah and in the Gospels He is the Messiah (Isaiah 53, Matthew 27, Mark 15)
- In Ephesians He is the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5)

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is made up of sixty six books that are found in two parts commonly known as the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament there are thirty nine books and in the New Testament there are twenty seven books.

The Old Testament:

Pentateuch: The first five Books of the Old Testament were written about 1440 B.C. by Moses. These are called the "Five Books of Moses", or the "Pentateuch" (five writings).

Genesis	The Book of beginnings (creation, man, sin, redemption, God's nation Israel)
Exodus	The record of God's deliverance of His people from the land of Egypt.
Leviticus	Priestly laws of holiness and worship through sacrifice and purification.
Numbers	The record of the continual disobedience of God's people and their wandering through the wilderness for 40 years.
Deuteronomy	Moses' great discourses to prepare the people to enter the Promised Land.

History: The next twelve Books in the Old Testament are *historical*. They were written about 1100-600 B.C. and describe God's dealings with His chosen people, Israel, the Hebrew nation. Note these Books and their titles.

Poetry: The following five books are *poetical*, describing in poetry and song God's greatness and His dealings with men. List these in order below.

Job	The suffering and loyal trust of a man who loved God.
Psalms	Songs of praise and instruction.
Proverbs	God's practical wisdom for successful living.
Ecclesiastes	The emptiness of earthly life without God.
Song of Solomon	A portrait of God's love for His people.

Prophecy: All the other books in the Old Testament fall into this last category. A prophet is one who is commissioned by God to deliver His message to men.

The New Testament:

The New Testament (or New Covenant - God's present agreement with man) reveals Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of men. In it we find the life of Christ, the beginning of Christianity, the way of salvation, instruction for Christian living, and God's plan for the future.

History: The first five books of the New Testament are *historical*.

Matthew	The life of Christ written especially for the Jews, revealing Jesus Christ as their long-awaited Savior-King.
Mark	The life of Christ revealing Jesus as the obedient Servant of God.
Luke	The life of Christ revealing Jesus as the perfect Man, emphasizing His humanity.
John	The life of Christ revealing Jesus as the Son of God, stressing His deity.
Acts	The beginning and spread of the Christian Church. This book could well be called the "Acts of the Holy Spirit."

Letters: The next 21 Books are *letters* (epistles). They are written to individuals, to churches, or to believers in general. These letters deal with every aspect of Christian faith and responsibility. Notice the titles of these epistles.

Prophecy: The last book of the New Testament is a book of *prophecy*. It tells of future events - including the return, reign, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the future state of believers and unbelievers.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT BIBLE

The most excellent, primary tool for Bible study is a Bible. There is no substitute for a thorough knowledge of God's Word. Therefore for effective Bible study you need to ensure that you have a good study Bible.

When purchasing a Bible you would consider the following:

- **The translation:**

There are many different translations of the Bible. For effective Bible study you need to ensure that your study Bible is in a translation that is closest to the original text (NKJV, KJV, American Standard) and is not a paraphrase (The Message). It is very effective when studying to be able to compare different translations so you can use more than one translation when studying.

- **The size of the print:**

The Bible that you will be using in studying should have large enough print so that you will be able to read it easily and for a long period of time without getting headaches.

- **Concordance:**

Your Bible should have a basic concordance and a few maps;

- **Explanatory Notes:**

A study Bible has explanatory notes, historical commentary and a cross-reference guide. These can be very useful in further study of a scripture. Note: The danger of a very comprehensive study Bible is that you can become lazy and rely completely on their notes and explanations without studying it yourself. Remember that the margin notes are not the inspired Word of God but merely man's thoughts so read the Bible more than the notes.

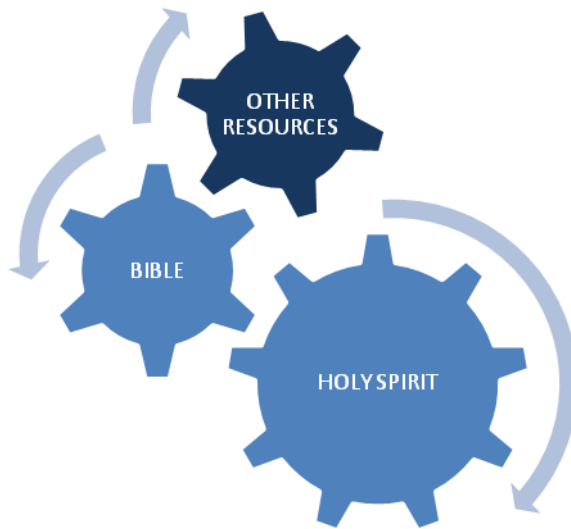
- **Format:**

Bibles are published in hardback, paperback, bonded leather or natural leather. Choose a format that will last you for many years. You do not want to write your notes in a Bible that will break after only a year.

Some good study Bible that can be recommended are the:

- Thomson Chain Reference Study Bible
- New International Version Study Bible
- Life Application Bible

3. OTHER RESOURCES



There are many useful tools and resource books that can aid you in effective interpretation and study of the Bible. Some of these tools include:

CONCORDANCES

A concordance helps find the reference for a Scripture in the Bible. It is an alphabetical index of words used in the Bible with a listing of verses where each word appears. A concordance enables you to find a specific passage of Scripture even if you can only remember a key word or two. The concordance also contains a short excerpt from the verse where that word occurs. Some also contain short definitions of each Bible word translated from the original language (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance).

A concordance is a useful tool for:

- Finding a Scripture reference;
- Conducting a word search;
- Accomplishing a topic search.

In Strong's Exhaustive Concordance every word is followed by a number. This number appears in the back of the book as a key to the original Hebrew or Greek word, transliterated in English letters. In Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible, the Hebrew or Greek word is printed with the English word. A section at the back tells what English words are used to translate each original word.

BIBLE DICTIONARIES

A Bible Dictionary is a lot like English dictionaries except that the entries (words) are words that might be meaningful for the study of the Bible. A Bible dictionary defines words, topics, names and places in the Bible.

A Bible Dictionary has entries for:

- Biblical people (like David, Abraham, Moses, Jesus)
- Biblical places (Jerusalem, Rome, Babylon, etc)
- Biblical concepts (like faith, repentance, sacrifice)
- Biblical events (like the fall of Jerusalem, the Babylonian Exile, the Resurrection of Jesus)
- Outlines of Bible books,
- Charts and diagrams
- Maps

Its primary use is in researching specific Biblical subjects. A good Bible Dictionary will give you the essential facts, presented briefly.

To choose a good Bible Dictionary/Bible Encyclopedia you should consider the following:

Reputation:

What is the reputation (reliability) both of the contributors as well as the publisher? What do you know of them? What is their theological point-of-view? Has the publisher released other reputable reference tools?

Recency:

When was this reference first published? If it was first released many years ago, has it been revised? You need a reference tool that presents the most up-to-date information.

References:

Does this tool have Bibliographies that point you to more information on a subject? Do they quote (or cite) an adequate amount of Bible passages for you to investigate? Does it have indexes that cross-reference subjects to more than one location in the book?

Relevancy:

Is this tool the right one for your needs? Does it contain enough detail - without being overwhelming? Does it require pre-requisite knowledge (such as Greek or Hebrew)? Is it a tool for scholars or specialists? Is it written from a particular perspective, or with a particular audience in mind?

COMMENTARIES

These books are designed to help in the interpretation and understanding of the Scriptures. Commentaries are a summary of the original language, ancient history and culture as well as the overall scope and message of the Bible. A good commentary should help in the application of the text without weighing the reader down with technicalities. Favourite general purpose commentaries include:

- Matthew Henry;
- Jamieson, Fausset and Brown;
- Adam Clarke;
- Tyndale Commentary;
- New International Commentary;
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary.

Commentaries can produce independence in the study of the Word of God. Rather than searching Scripture to explain the Scripture that is under review, a learner can rely on the writing of the commentator. There is nothing like gaining insight firsthand. The Holy Spirit is the best teacher. There is no substitute for reading the Bible. It throws a great deal of light on the commentaries.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

The benefit of this resource is thoroughness and speed. A computer searches for verses and words in several versions of the Bible and in multiple other books all at one time. This option requires a computer which may be expensive to get initially. The software itself may be expensive. However, the cost of the software is invariably far cheaper than purchasing the books in print.

BIBLE INTRODUCTIONS

Some books deal with specialised or limited subjects. These books look at issues like: Who wrote Psalms? When did Paul visit Rome? When was the Old Testament canon closed? Which Gospel was written first? These books are included in an abridged form in certain good study Bibles. Good books to consider:

- Introduction to the New Testament by Thiessen;
- Introductory Guide To the Old Testament by Unger;
- Survey of Old Testament Introduction by Gleason L. Archer, Jr.;

THEOLOGY BOOKS

It is always good for the serious student to own a good, well written Theology book. The study of Theology looks at the different doctrines and teaching of the Bible. Some books to consider:

- A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr.;
- Basic Christianity, J.R.W. Stott;
- Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis;
- Outlines of Theology, A.A. Hodge.

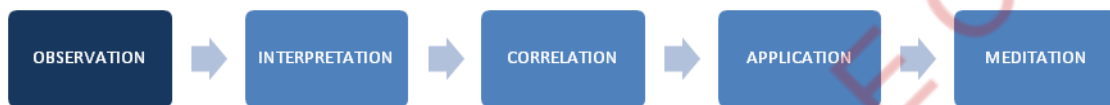
Not all books that carry the title "Theology" are accepted teaching of the Bible. The student must be careful that the author has based the book on Biblical teaching. Many authors are liberal in approach. These scholars do not literally believe in the Word of God. Before purchasing a book, you should find out about the background of the author.

HOW TO BEGIN STUDYING THE BIBLE

5 EASY STEPS: OICAM (ACRONYM)



OBSERVATION: WHAT IS BEING SAID



The first step in your study is to make observations of what you are reading. This is done as you read the passage or scripture over at least three times. As you read the portion of scripture ask yourself questions about the passage:

- Who is writing this?
- Who was the original audience?
- What is the setting?
- What time did it happen?
- Who is involved?

Levels of observation:

There are three levels of observation that you can make:

- **Overall Understanding:**

The first level is to observe the overall “landscape” of the text by reading in its entirety in one possible sitting. This involves many approaches like reading the text generally; reading the headings and reading the first sentence or two of each section.

- **Questioning:**

Once you have a general understanding of what the text is saying, go back to the beginning of the text and focus on six questions:

- What?
- When?
- Where?
- How?
- Who?
- Why?

These questions will help you discover the essential facts of the story. When you apply these questions to the study of the Bible you will uncover information that leads you into deeper understanding of God's Word. It is not necessary to find the answers to all the six questions in every passage, but the more you find, the more rewarding the exercise will be. Write down your observations as you work your way through the six journalistic questions.

- **Digging deeper:**

The third level involves digging beneath the surface to uncover insights and details that are not as readily apparent as the information you have gained thus far. Digging deeper involves six focus points for your discussion:

- Firstly it looks at repeated words and phrases.
- Secondly it notices peculiar words and phrases that have been used in the text.
- Thirdly it compares and makes contrasts between words in the passage. For example words like "dead and alive", "grace and works" and "aliens and access".
- Fourthly it looks for figurative expressions.
- Fifthly it notices anything that appears strange in the passage. This may include something that you do not understand or are not familiar with.
- Lastly it pictures you in the scene.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TEXT



When we interpret the Biblical text that we are studying we mean that we are regarding the passage as though we were a detective and looking for clues that will help us better understand. It is reviewing all the things that you made in your observations by paying attention to words, themes and principles.

ASK FIVE QUESTIONS

In the interpretation step there are five questions that will help you to grasp the meaning and intent of what you have read:

- **What is the context?**

The first thing to do is to look at the surrounding verses. The true meaning of a verse is the one provided by its context. There are two levels of context. An immediate context referring to the sentence in which a word is found or the paragraph in which a sentence is found. A remote context referring to the entire line of thought leading up to the verse.

- **What do the Words Mean?**

The Bible is written by stringing words together to form logical thoughts. This presents certain problems. Firstly, some words may have more than one meaning. For example: love – love can be used to express God's love (agape), affection of a friend (phileo) and sexual love (eros). Secondly, language is dynamic and therefore the meaning can change over time.

- **What does the Grammar Show?**

Words are always used in combination with other words. The relationship of those words provides the meaning. When looking at a passage of Scripture you would need to give some attention to the structure of the sentence (tenses). For example the words, "raised", "made" "created"

speak of an accomplished work. When seeing the words in the past tense in connection with what God has already done for us we realize that it speaks of something that already is in existence (a finished work) and not something that still needs to be accomplished. In understanding this we get are able to interpret a scripture differently to what we would have if we had ignored the structure.

- **What is the background?**

When reading you should never neglect the setting, the plot and the key characters. The Bible has a setting. The events took place in a certain culture – a Middle Eastern Semitic culture. This society is mostly agrarian and simple. The cities were small and compact and had towers, walls and gates for protection. They generally were on elevated sites with a water source nearby for sustenance and protection. Water did not come from a tap but was fetched from huge cisterns or wells. Clothing was handmade, earthy and simple. The basic article of clothing was a tunic to which various accessories were added. Understanding the lifestyle, customs and language of the day helps you interpret the setting and meaning of the Bible.

- **How does your interpretation balance with the rest of Scripture?**

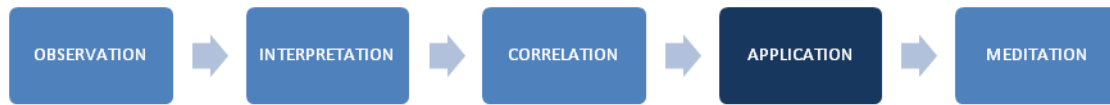
It is important in your Christian walk to maintain balance. You can be thrown off balance if you emphasise one doctrine to the neglect of all the others. The ultimate context of any text is the entire Bible.

CORRELATION: WHERE ELSE IS IT SAID?



When you correlate something you are bringing other verses and portions of scripture into the passage so that you can better interpret it. For example when reading the Gospels it is important that you look at all the Gospels at the same time so that you will be given more insight into what is being said. When looking at a topic it is important to look at that topic throughout the Bible by getting other scripture references and studying them.

APPLICATION: WHAT MUST I NOW DO?



When you open your heart to what the text means to you and start to personalize the truth you uncover in Scripture, you have begun the process of application. The focus here is on what God is saying to you specifically through what you have read. You meditate on the principles, prohibitions, commands and encouragements found in the Scripture and you begin to apply it in your life.

Here are nine questions that you can use when beginning to make application of the Word of God:

- **Is there an example for me to follow?**

For example: Abraham is an outstanding model of compassionate prayer on behalf of wicked people - begging the Lord to spare them. Whose example are you following?

- **Is there a sin to avoid?**

One of the values of the Word is that it raises your consciousness in regard to moral issues. It convicts us in our old nature so that we can be changed and take off our old habits and allow the fruits of the Holy Spirit to develop in our hearts.

- **Is there a promise to claim?**

God's Word is filled with promises ---- promises that are made by the Person who does not lie and who is totally capable of fulfilling them. Are you claiming the promises of the Scriptures over your life?

- **Is there a prayer to repeat?**

Study the prayers and ask yourself, what is there in these prayers that I can pray? How and why were their prayers effective?

- **Is there a command to obey?**

1 Peter 1:14 “Obey God because you are his children. Don't slip back into your old ways of doing evil; you didn't know any better then.” John 14:15 “If you love me, obey my commandments.” Matthew 7:24-27 “Anyone who listens to my teaching and obeys me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse, because it is built on rock. But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will fall with a mighty crash.”

- **Is there a condition to meet?**

Many of God's promises are based on conditions set forth in the text. For instance, Jesus said, “If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7). We often times neglect the first part of the text (the condition) and claim the promises.

- **Is there a verse to memorise?**

Obviously, any verse of scripture can be memorised. But some will carry more significance for you than others.

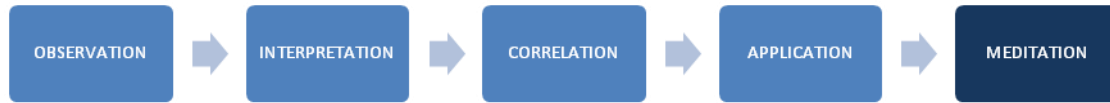
- **Is there an error to mark?**

We need to know the Word of God so that we will be able to contend with the faith (Jude 1:3) and thereby not fall into error.

- **Is there a challenge to face?**

Whatever it is, the Spirit uses the scripture to promote change in your life. The question is, are you open to such change? Are you prepared to take on this challenge? Philippians 3:12 “I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be.”

MEDITATION



Deuteronomy 6:6-9 “And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Meditation is reflective thinking on God's Word and ways, with a view to application. Through this discipline you align your life with God's will and purpose as you seek to become a mature follower of Jesus Christ.

Meditation involves:

- **Understanding the context of the verse:**

Look at the perimeter of the verse as you meditate. The meaning of a verse is colored and revealed by the verses that surround it.

- **Paraphrase the verse:**

After understanding the context we need to paraphrase it. Paraphrase means to put in your own words. Say it; then write it down.

- **Pulverize the verse:**

The next step is to pulverize the verse, looking at its individual words. Pulverizing involves a threefold process:

Say the verse aloud. First say the entire verse aloud to yourself. Emphasize a different word each time you slowly quote it. Notice the relationship of each word to the other words and to the verse's entirety.

Choose one or two key words. Three or four words may be significant in the verse, but choose the one or two that seem most important to you.

Ask questions about one of the key words. By asking questions, you chew an idea over and over to get maximal benefit from it.

- **Personalize the verse:**

The fourth meditation step is to personalize the verse. The goal of all study is application.

Pray the verse into your life by putting yourself in the verse:

The fifth step is to pray the verse back to God, putting your name and circumstance in the verse.

12 BIBLE STUDY TECHNIQUES

In order to study the Bible in more depth, apart from merely reading it and meditating on it, the Bible student is able to use 12 different methods for Bible interpretation and Study. These methods will be studied in more detail in the remainder of the course with assignments that will put into practice what has been learnt. Therefore each assignment will follow up on the next one thereby giving a practical study on each method.

DEVOTIONAL METHOD

The Devotional Method is the most basic method and the foundation upon which all other Bible Study is built. It is the type of study that takes place in your day to day reading of the Word of God.

There are four steps to the Devotional Method:

STEP ONE: PRAY

Ask God to help you as you read the Bible to open the eyes of your understanding so that you will be able to start to apply the scripture to your life.

STEP TWO: MEDIATE

Once you have chosen the chapter or portion of scripture that you will be reading, read it through and begin to meditate on what you have read.

- Visualize the scene and the people
- Emphasize each of the words in the verse
- Paraphrase the verse
- Personalize the verse
- Pray the verse

STEP THREE: WRITE A PERSONAL APPLICATION

The ultimate goal in studying the Bible is application and therefore you need to write out how you will be applying your scripture to your life NOW. A personal journal should be used for this basis. At the end of the year it is always a good idea to review your personal journal to see what God has taught you through the year and how you have been able to better apply the truth.

When you are writing out your application remember:

- Make it personal – Use words like I, me, mine, my
- Make it practical – It should be something you are able to do or something you should stop doing
- Make it possible – It needs to be something that you can accomplish (with the help of the Holy Spirit)
- Make it provable – Can you prove that you have changed? Is there some way that you are able to measure your success in its application?

STEP FOUR: MEMORIZE A KEY VERSE

When memorizing a scripture remember the following keys to successful memorization:

- Select a short passage to memorize.
- Pray over it.
- Read it.
- Re-read the passage at least ten times.
- Write it out on a small card.
- Go over your card at least ten times, reading it out loud.
- Put it away and in a few hours or a day, pick up the card and re-read it several times.

ASSIGNMENT: DEVOTIONAL BIBLE STUDY

1. Study Ephesians 1
2. Follow the steps that have been given for the Devotional Bible study
3. Write out all information that relates to each step in a format that you will be able to use further on in the course.

CHARACTER QUALITY METHOD

The purpose of Bible study is for us to change and to become more Christ-like. In order for us to become more and more like Him, we need to expose ourselves to the Word of God so that through the Word and the conviction of the Holy Spirit we will learn the positive traits that we should be “putting on” and the negative traits that which should be “taking off” (Colossians 3).

This method involves find out what the Bible says about a particular characteristic of a person, with heavy emphasis on personal application. It differs from the Biographical method in that here you are studying the characteristics of a person, rather than the person himself. The qualities that you can study can either be positive, negative or both.

The purpose of this method of Bible study is to identify character qualities taught in the Bible with the view of learning how to avoid negative ones and building the positive ones. For example, if we want to become meek, we would have to know what meekness is before we can really apply it.

STEP ONE: DECIDE ON THE CHARACTERISTIC AND FIND ALL RELEVANT SCRIPTURE

Choose the characteristics that you would like to study (and the person who exhibited it) and find all the scriptures that you can on the trait.

STEP TWO: NAME THE QUALITY AND THE OPPOSITE QUALITY

Find the definition of the quality that you Aare studying as well as the definition of the opposite quality. For example: The humility of Jesus (Philippians 2) can be contrasted with the pride of the religious leaders.

STEP THREE: DO A SIMPLE WORD STUDY

Look up the Bible definition of the Word by using the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and the Vine's Expository Dictionary.

STEP FOUR: STUDY ALL THE SCRIPTURES

Use your concordance and topical Bible to find all the verses you can relating to this quality. Write down the cross-reference and a brief description of that verse. Ask some of these questions about the quality as you meditate on the cross-reference verses:

- What are the benefits this trait can bring me?
- What are some bad consequences this trait can bring me?
- What are benefits this trait can bring to others?
- What are some bad consequences this trait can bring to others?
- Is there any promise from God related to this trait?
- Is there any warning or judgment related to this trait?
- Is there a command related to this trait?
- What factors produce this trait?
- Did Jesus have anything to say about this quality? What?
- What writer talked about this quality the most?
- Is this trait symbolized by anything in Scripture? Is that significant?
- Is this trait listed with a group of qualities?
- What Scriptures tell me directly what God thinks of this trait?
- Do I want more or less of this trait in my life?

STEP FIVE: FIND A MEMORY VERSE

Write down a memory verse that you can memorize from this study.

STEP SIX: SUMMARIZE

Summarize the main things that you learnt from your study. Look for common ideas that show up more than once in the verses and cross referencing that you did in the previous steps. These may be some of the primary lessons that God wants to teach you.

STEP SEVEN: SELECT A SITUATION TO WORK ON

Application of your study is vital. It is not enough to learn the literal meaning and spiritual significance of the passage. For God's Word to change you, you must be able to apply it to your life. Think of an area in your life where you can begin to apply this principle that you learnt through the character study. Use the following questions to help you determine the practical application of the passage.

- Is there a sin for me to avoid?
- Is there a sin for me to turn away from?
- Is there a promise for me to claim?
- Is there a praise to give?
- Is there a prayer to pray?
- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a command for me to obey?

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study the quality of holiness as discussed in Ephesians 1:4
2. Follow each of the steps of Character Quality Bible Study
3. Complete the following:

Quality	Holiness
Definition:	
Opposite of:	
Cross reference::	
Who exhibited these traits:	
What have I learnt from this trait?	
Memory Verse	
Application	

BIOGRAPHICAL METHOD

The biographical method is very similar to the Character quality method of Bible Study. The difference here is that you will be looking at not only one character trait of a particular person, but you will be looking at the whole life of the individual. Therefore it is a more in depth study of the life of the person or group of people. A Character Study involves carefully studying through the entire Life of a Bible Character in order to learn God's lessons through that person's life.

This type of study is important as through it we are able to see how God has dealt with men and women throughout time as well as learn from their accounts. Romans 15:4 "Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises." 1 Corinthians 10:11 "All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close."

STEP ONE: SELECT A PERSON

Choose a person whose life will give you valuable insight into your own life. Be careful when selecting a person that when you do the study that you are studying the same person all the way through. For example: when studying "John", ensure that you are studying either John the Baptist or John the Beloved. When studying "Zechariah" ensure that you are either studying the evil king of the Old Testament or the prophet whom God called.

STEP TWO: MAKE A LIST OF ALL RELEVANT SCRIPTURES

Using your reference tools write out a list of all verses where you are able to read about the person who you are studying.

STEP THREE: MAKE A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART / OUTLINE

In a chart or as an outline begin to list the various events that took place in the individual's life.

STEP FOUR: GAIN MORE INSIGHT

As you are reading the various scriptures write down any notes or questions that you have on the individual.

- What was the life of this person like without (or prior to) a relationship with God?
- How did this person's relationship with God begin? What did God do to get this person's attention? How did the person respond to God?
- How did the person carry on his relationship with God? (Prayer, obedience, service to God and other people, worship, etc.)
- How did the person's relationship with God change him? What kind of character has the person developed as a result of his relationship with God? Has God led the person to do something that he could not have done by himself?
- What events took place in his/her life that can be learnt from?
- What was their reputation like?
- What different tests of character did they go through? Were they successful in these tests?
- In what time of history did this person live?
- What was the personality of the individual

STEP FIVE: IDENTIFY CHARACTER QUALITIES

This step should be similar to the character quality method that has already been study.

STEP SIX: IDENTIFY BIBLICAL TRUTHS

What biblical truths have been identified in the life of the person you are studying and how can these biblical truths be seen.

STEP SEVEN: SUMMARIZE THE MAIN LESSON OF HER / HIS LIFE

Make a short summary of what you learnt about the individual – how they overcame, how they related to God etc.

STEP EIGHT: PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Did I see anything of myself in the individual?
- Did he show me my weaknesses?
- Did he show me where I need to get strong?
- Where do I fall short from his strengths?
- What practical way can I strengthen these weaknesses?

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study the Life of Paul
2. Follow the steps that you have learnt in doing a Biographical Study.
3. Write out your observations in a chart with notes for each necessary step,

WORD STUDY METHOD

The Bible was originally written in three languages – Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. Because these languages were far more expressive than that of the English language it is important that you go back and study the true meaning of the words.

The word study takes a microscopic look at the origin, definition, occurrences and the uses of a particular word and sees how this word relates to the context of the rest of the scripture. The aim of the word study is to learn precisely what the Bible writer was meaning when he wrote the words and thus get a correct interpretation of the biblical truth written in scripture.

STEP ONE: CHOOSE YOUR WORD

Choose the word from the verse that you are reading that you would like to do a word study on.

STEP TWO: FIND ITS ENGLISH DEFINITION

Using a dictionary find its English definition.

STEP THREE: COMPARE TRANSLATIONS

Using various translations of the Bible look at which word is most commonly used in that verse. For example: Sometimes a verse translation might use the word “love” whilst in another translations of that same verse the word “affection” is used.

STEP FOUR: WRITE DOWN THE DEFINITION OF THE ORIGINAL WORD

Using the Concordance find out what the original word was in the text (this would be Hebrew or Greek) and write out the original meaning or meanings of the word.

STEP FIVE: FIND OTHER REFERENCES

Looking at other references that you found of the word from the Concordance see how many times the word has been used in the Bible and under what circumstances it was used. It is also useful to see how the word could change over the Testaments.

STEP SIX: APPLICATION

Write out how the understanding of the word is able to strengthen your spiritual life.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Do a word study on the word “redemption” (Ephesians 1:4)
2. Follow each of the steps in the Word Study
3. Write out what you have learnt from each of the steps provided. Summarize it and make a personal application

THEMATIC STUDY METHOD

The thematic method of Bible study is used when you want to investigate certain themes that run throughout the Bible. This means that they are not only selective to one specific chapter or book but that it runs all the way through from Genesis to Revelations. This method of study is similar to a Topical Bible Study but is more specific and is thus shorter. For example: A topical bible study will look at the whole theme of “prayer” including who prayed, how they prayed, when they prayed and answered prayer, whereas a thematic bible study will look only at how to prayer.

STEP ONE: CHOOSE A THEME

Select a theme that you are interested in learning about or that you feel that God wants you to know more about. Start with a short and simple study but with one where you will be able to later extend to a more comprehensive topical study.

STEP TWO: LIST ALL THE VERSES YOU WILL BE STUDYING

List all the verses that you would like to study on the topic. A Strong's Exhaustive Concordance as well as your Reference Bible will be an aid in finding other verses on the theme that you would like to study.

STEP THREE: DECIDE ON QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ASK

Before you read through the verses, prepare some questions on the theme that you would like to know that you are hoping will be answered in your study.

STEP FOUR: ASK THE QUESTIONS FOR EACH VERSE

Ask each question that you have written down to each of the verses that you listed in step two. Did the verses that you studied answer the questions that you asked concerning the topic? If while you were reading the verses you had other questions that you were able to answer, write these down.

STEP FIVE: DRAW A CONCLUSION AND MAKE APPLICATION

Summarize what you have learnt by writing down the answers next to the questions that you wrote previously. Once you have received a better understanding of the topic, write out an application that you can make of this theme to your personal life.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study the theme of “redemption through His Blood” as mentioned in Ephesians 1:7
2. Follow each of the steps for Thematic Bible Study
3. Write out your observations and what you have learnt.

Cross References	
Questions to Ask?	<p>For example: What does redemption mean? Who is “Him” spoken of here? How was redemption made possible? What are the implications of this redemption</p>
Answers to questions? (use the cross references that you wrote down as well as this verse to answer these questions)	
Write a summary of what you have learnt.	
Application: What does this mean to me?	

TOPICAL METHOD

A Topical Study involves a careful and thorough study of a Specific Topic addressed by Scripture. These may be Theological in nature, such as a study of God, Christ, Salvation, Christ's Return, Miracles, Sin, etc., or they may be General topics of interest such as Parenting, Marriage, Forgiving Others, etc. The Bible addresses nearly every aspect of our lives, so there is almost no limit to what can be studied.

This type of study can be very beneficial to you as it helps you to study the Word of God systematically and logically whilst also giving a balanced view on a particular topic.

STEP ONE: SELECT THE TOPIC

Select the topic that you would like to study and compile a list of all the words that you would need to look at when looking for references. This will include look at both the synonyms and the antonyms of the word. For example: When studying the word suffering you would also need to look at words such as "affliction", "chastisement", "pain", "sorrow", "trials" and "tribulations". If you were studying "faith" you would also look at words like "belief", "doubt", "fear" etc.

STEP TWO: COMPILE A LIST OF SCRIPTURE

Using an Exhaustive Concordance, locate every verse that mentions this Topic. A Topical Concordance is especially helpful to direct us to related verses that speak about our selected Topic.

STEP THREE: READ THE VERSES

Read through each of the references individually making notes of importance on each of the verses studied. Copy these Passages on a separate sheet so that you can see and study them as a whole.

STEP FOUR: STUDY THE REFERENCES

Study each of the selected passages using the principles and methods of Bible Study. Keep accurate notes of your observations, interpretations, and applications.

STEP FIVE: COMPARE AND GROUP REFERENCES

Those verses that compliment each other and that say similar things can be grouped together so as to categorize them in smaller sub-topics. For example if you were study faith you could have the following subtopics – examples of men of faith, examples of men of unbelief, obstacles of faith, blessings of faith, reasons for faith etc.

STEP SIX: CONDENSE YOUR STUDY

Create a brief outline or summary of your study so that you will be able to share the basics of your study to someone. Your notes should be simple and easy enough for anyone to be able to follow.

STEP SEVEN: WRITE OUT APPLICATION

Apply all the truths and principles that God teaches you through His Word

ASSIGNMENT

1. Continue to study the topic of redemption but now extend this to Redeemer, the redeemed, atonement and salvation. Look at the differences between the words atonement and redemption and make observation as to what the difference is.
2. Follow each of the steps in the Topical Study Methods
3. Write out what you have learnt in a chart or an outline that summarizes the main ideas.
4. How can you apply what you have learnt to your life?

BOOK BACKGROUND METHOD

This study is useful in understanding the background to a specific book of the Bible. This type of study is general as it looks at the historical events that took place in the book, the culture at the time when the book was written, the political environment and the spiritual condition of the people at that time. During this type of study it may even be necessary to look at any archaeological findings that have been found.

STEP ONE: CHOOSE THE BOOK

Decide on which book you would like to study in order to gain a better understanding in the backdrop of the writings.

STEP TWO: OBTAIN INSIGHT

Gather as much information as you are able to from the following:

- Geography: Become familiar with the landscape, mountains, location of the city, landmarks and borders. Look at any maps that are available so that when reading the book you have a better picture of where it is positioned.
- History: List the chronological events that took place in the book and determine what events led up to the various happenings in the book.
- Culture: Study the culture at the time for example: the type of music, the clothing that was worn, the languages, the family life, the religious ceremonies, the weapons and the tools used and the occupations.
- Politics: Understand the political environment at the time. For example: Who was the ruling power? How did they rule?

STEP THREE: SUMMARIZE YOUR RESEARCH

Write out how the information that you have studied will help you to better understand the book that you are reading.

STEP FOUR: WRITE OUT A PERSONAL APPLICATION

ASSIGNMENT

Complete a Book Background Study of Ephesians following all the steps provided. Write out observations.

BOOK SUMMARY METHOD

Once you have completed a book background study, the next step in studying a particular book of the Bible is to do a book summary. This involves gaining a sweeping overview of the entire book.

STEP ONE: READ THE BOOK THROUGH

Before you begin this study you need to read the book through from beginning to end in one sitting in as many translations as you have. Do not stop at any chapter divisions.

STEP TWO: MAKE NOTES

Once you have read it through take a pencil and begin to make notes on your first impression of the book. For example:

- Where does the Book fit into the whole Bible? Is it historical, poetry etc?
- What is the purpose of the Book?
- What are the key words to the Book?
- What key verse would best describe the Book?
- What is the emotional tone and literary style of the Book?
- What main themes are spoken throughout the Book?
- Who are the major personalities in the Book and what role do they play?

STEP THREE: DO A BACKGROUND SURVEY

Using the steps from Bible Book Background, do a background survey to understand the context of the Book.

STEP FOUR: WRITE OUT AN OUTLINE OF THE CONTENTS

Prepare an outline or a chart that will best summarize what you have learnt from each of the chapters. This will help you to see at a glance the contents of the entire book.

For example:

Name of Book					
Division one		Division Two		Division three	
Chp one	Chp 2	Chp 3		Chp 4	Chp 5
Think of a title for each chapter List major themes in each chapter					

STEP FIVE: MAKE APPLICATION

Find a portion of the book that was especially significant to you and make it personal.

ASSIGNMENT

Do a Book Summary Study on the book of Ephesians following each of the steps provided. Write down all your notes and observations as well as a personal application.

CHAPTER SUMMARY METHOD

The chapter summary method of Bible study involves gaining a general understanding of the contents of a chapter of the Bible. When doing a chapter summary it is required that the Bible student reads the chapter through as many as five times, asking questions about what the chapter is about and then summarizing the main thoughts. In so doing it is possible that the Bible student will be able to gain an overall view of the Bible in a way that does not require too much time. Some common chapter studies are:

Chapter	Main Thought
1 Corinthians 13	Love chapter
Ephesians 6	Armour of God
Psalms 23	The Good Shepherd
Isaiah 53	The Messiah – Jesus
Matthew 28	The Great Commission

STEP ONE: READ

Begin this study by reading through the chapter up to five times. Whilst you are reading do not stop and consider what you are reading verse by verse, rather read to get a general feel of the chapter. It is also helpful that you not only read it through quietly but that you read it aloud in as many translations as you can.

STEP TWO: CAPTION

Once you have read the chapter through and have gained a general idea of what the chapter's main theme is, give the chapter a short description. For example: Hebrews 11 – The Heroes of Faith, Luke 15 – Lost and Found

STEP THREE: CONTENTS

In this step you are required to write down a summary or an outline of the chapter making a list of all the main points in the chapter. So for example, when doing a study on Luke 15, you could break this chapter into three parts: The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son.

STEP FOUR: CHIEF PEOPLE

List the most important person or people in the chapter and make note of the significance of these people in the chapter. What were they doing? What did they say? Why are they significant to the theme of the chapter?

STEP FIVE: CHOICE VERSE

Select a verse that is found in the chapter that best summarizes the main theme of the whole chapter. For example: Luke 15:7 "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

STEP SIX: CRUCIAL WORDS

Make a list of all the words that are used continuously throughout the chapter. There may also be words that are in contrast to the words most often read. For example: lost (Luke 15:4, 5, 9, 24, 32) and found (Luke 15:5, 6, 9, 24, 32)

STEP SEVEN: CHALLENGES

Are there any questions that you have in the chapter that you feel you would need to study further – write them down so that you will be able to come back to them later and pursue your study on this.

STEP EIGHT: CROSS REFERENCES

Using your other resources, your concordance, Bible dictionaries etc, find other verses in the Book that you are studying and in the rest of the Bible that can help clarify what you have learnt in the chapter. For example: Luke 15, Isaiah 53:6, Matthew 18:11-14, John 10:10-14. These additional scriptures can be used later when doing a thematic study.

STEP NINE: CHRIST SEEN

The Bible reveals Christ, from the Old Testament all the way through to the New Testament. Therefore Christ can be seen in the chapter that you are studying. Describe how Christ is revealed. For example: In the parable of the Lost Sheep we see that Christ is the Good Shepherd who came to earth to actively seek those who were lost. In the Lost Son we see the love of God in sending His Son to die for us so that He would be able to reconcile us to Himself. Because of Christ we are now accepted by the Father and are openly welcomed.

STEP TEN: CENTRAL LESSON AND APPLICATION

Write down the major principles, insights and lessons that you have learnt from the chapter. It is this central lesson which will be used in your application of scripture. For example: In the same way that God has actively made an effort to restore the sinner to Himself – looking for the lost coin and sheep, welcoming those who are sinners – so we need to making an effort to be a witness for Him.

ASSIGNMENT

Using the steps provided for Chapter Summary Study Method, complete a study on all the chapters in the book of Ephesians. Write down your study notes and observations.

CHAPTER ANALYSIS METHOD

Once again this study takes the Bible Book Background Survey and the Book Summary Study and goes one step further by taking each of the chapters individually and summarizing them.

STEP ONE: DO A BOOK BACKGROUND STUDY

STEP TWO: DO A BOOK SUMMARY STUDY

STEP THREE: READ THE CHAPTERS THROUGH

Read the chapters through and paraphrase them, title them and break them into divisions.

STEP FOUR: LIST YOUR OBSERVATIONS

Write down what you feel the chapter is saying. Go through the chapter verse by verse and write down what you observe as you read.

STEP FIVE: ASK INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS:

As you are reading through the chapter begin to ask questions:

- Why did the writer say this?
- What is the meaning of ?
- What is the significance of ... ?
- What is the implication of "..."?
- Why is this important?

Name of Book and Chapter you are studying			
Observation: What does it say?		Interpretation: What does it mean?	
V1		V1	
V2		V2	

To be able to find out the meaning of the chapter and verses that you are studying always remember:

- Context: Read the previous verses and even chapter before making an assumption
- Words: Define all words using the Word Study Method

- Scripture: Compare scriptures with other scriptures so that your interpretation fits with the whole of the Bible

STEP SIX: CORRELATE YOUR CHAPTER WITH OTHER SCRIPTURES

Cross reference the chapter that you are studying with other chapters and verses from within the same book, the same Testament and throughout the whole bible.

STEP SEVEN: SUMMARISE IN AN OUTLINE

Complete an outline for the chapter which best summarizes the main ideas and themes in the chapter.

STEP EIGHT: MAKE PERSONAL APPLICATION

ASSIGNMENT

Complete a chapter analysis study on each of the six chapters of Ephesians. Write down all your observations from your study notes.

BOOK SYNTHESIS METHOD

The book synthesis method ties the whole book of the Bible together. So from having broken down each of the chapter into divisions through the Book Summary Study and through the Chapter Summary Survey, now the student can take all that they have studied and bring all the chapters together so that the student will be able to make a conclusion of the entire book of the Bible.

STEP ONE: REREAD THE BOOK THROUGH

STEP TWO: WRITE OUT A DETAILED FINAL OUTLINE

Using the chapter study outlines, write out a more detailed outline of the entire book. Place the various chapters into divisions or into the part of the book where it belongs.

STEP THREE: WRITE OUT A DESCRIPTIVE TITLE FOR THE BOOK

Think of an original title for the book which explains the theme of the book.

STEP FOUR: MAKE A SUMMARY OF YOUR INSIGHTS

STEP FIVE: WRITE OUT PERSONAL APPLICATION

ASSIGNMENT

Complete a Book Synthesis Study for the Book of Ephesians. Follow each of the steps and provide your study notes and final outline.

VERSE BY VERSE METHOD

The verse by verse study is even more detailed than the chapter by chapter summary that we have already studied. This study incorporates all the various method that we have already learnt and explains one verse of the Bible at a time. This type of study is very intensive and requires large amounts of time.

STEP ONE: CHOOSE THE VERSE

Usually when you have done a chapter summary there is a verse that you would like to study further.

STEP TWO: READ THROUGH THE VERSE

Read the verse through as many times as you can in various translations.

STEP THREE: DO A WORD STUDY ON THE WORDS

Choose the words in the verse that you would like to study separately. Using the Word Study Method, find out the original meaning of the words.

STEP FOUR: UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Ensure that you have understood the context of the verse by reading through the previous verses or chapter and those that come after the verse that you will be studying. Understand the culture and the background to the verse by looking at the times it was written, the culture of those times and the political and historical settings.

STEP FIVE: PARAPHRASE OR SUMMARIZE THE VERSE

In your own words paraphrase what the verse says.

STEP SIX: LIST SOME QUESTIONS, ANSWERS OR OBSERVATIONS

Write down any questions and observations that you have made from the verse

STEP SEVEN: CROSS REFERENCE

Find other scriptures in the same book, Testament or the entire Bible that reveal the same truth as in the verse you are studying.

STEP EIGHT: RECORD YOUR INSIGHT

STEP NINE: PERSONAL APPLICATION

ASSIGNMENT

Choose any verse from the Book of Ephesians that has personally ministered to you through this study and do an in depth Verse study. Complete each of the steps provided and write out your study notes and personal application

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